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Foxconn Employs Interns between 14 to 16

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

According to China Labor Watch's investigation and a Chinese media report, Foxconn Yantai employed child labor during this last summer. Workers at this factory reported to CLW on October 4th that interns under 16 years of age worked in the factory. This has also been confirmed by the Chinese radio show "Zhongguo Zongheng". The report can be found here: <http://games.qq.com/a/20121016/000053.htm> 

A small number of student interns employed in the summer were between 14 to 16 years old. Now Foxconn has begun to send those underage interns back to school. These underage interns were mainly sent to Foxconn by schools, but Foxconn did not check the IDs of these young interns. The schools involved in this incident should take primary responsible, but Foxconn is also culpable for not confirming the ages of their workers. China Labor Watch calls on the Chinese government to improve the current intern system of Chinese schools.

Update on Oct 16,2012

According to our most recent investigation, the number of underage interns (14-16 yo) is around 200. But Chinese media report stated that there are around 60. From the information we received, these interns have been sent back to schools.

Translated report from Voice of China

Foxconn child labor work overtime around the clock to make Japanese video game consoles

October 16, 2012

According to a report by the Voice of China's radio show "Breadth of News", in the beginning of September, Voice of China reported on the fact that large numbers of students from secondary technical schools in Jiangsu Province had been forced to do internships at Foxconn factories. Foxconn responded to this by claiming that students could end their internship and leave the factory whenever they wished. But not a month later, the Chinese Central News Hotline received multiple calls from university students in Yantai, Shandong Province reporting that from September of this year, multiple vocational colleges in Yantai had arranged for their students to enter Foxconn's Yantai Technology Park as interns. Among these students were some who had not reached the age of 16.

This reporter's investigation discovered that these students worked as normal workers in the factory, regularly working overtime and night shifts. Many of these students said they wished to return to school, but their teachers threatened them, saying "if you don't intern, then you won't get any credit, won't receive a graduation diploma, or may even be kicked out of school." It turns out that Foxconn never honored its promise to let students "end their internship and leave the factory whenever they wish".

Foxconn Yantai is currently testing the Nintendo Wii U video game console

Why did Foxconn Yantai begin hiring students on a large scale? Is interning at Foxconn a choice of the student or is it forced by the school? Or is there another reason behind all of this?

This year, 14 years and 10 months old Xiao Wang (alias) is a second year student studying in the machinery department of Yantai Engineering and Technology College. On September 10, he and more than 2000 classmates came together to Foxconn's Yantai Technology Park to intern. The students were put to work on production and transport on the factory floor.

Xiao Wang said, "I did transport work, helping them move goods. Right now, the night shift is 7:40 PM until the morning...you know, till what time in the morning is uncertain. Whenever the work is done is when you get off your shift. If you don't finish the work, he (the production line foreman) won't let you end your shift. Usually, you can get off by 7 AM. My arms would hurt from the work."

Last Friday, after working consecutive night and overtime shifts, Xiao Wang didn't feel well. When he asked his teacher for sick leave, the Xiao Wang didn't receive approval. He thus registered his third "absenteeism" and was fired by the factory. A classmate asked a teacher from the school staying at Foxconn about the situation. The teacher responded by saying that if you are fired by the factory, then you'll be kicked out of school when you go back.

The student asked, "If someone was fired from the factory, could they return to school?"

Teacher Zhang answered, "After they return, they'll be kicked out of school."

Student: "They'll be kicked out when they go back?"

Teacher Zhang: "Yep."

Students under 16 y.o.a. also required to work overtime and night shifts

This reporter came to understand that the work ID's of underage workers in the Foxconn Yantai factory had an extra line on their ID numbers, allowing them to be differentiated. Moreover, students have their personal ID card copied when they first enter the factory.

According to preliminary calculations, among interning students from Yantai Engineering and Technology College at Foxconn Yantai, "fifty to sixty" are underage. These students are also required to work overtime and night shifts.

This reporter: "How many days of rest do you get in a month?"

An underage student: "Not even one."

Reporter: "No rest during the weekend?"

The underage student: "You have to look at whether or not production output is high. If it is high every weekend, then production won't stop on any of those weekends."

Similarly, second-year foodstuffs and accounting majors from the Shandong Business Institute were sent to Foxconn to intern on October 8.

Student: "We must go. If we don't, they won't give us a graduation diploma or school credit."

Reporter: "Who said this?"

Student: "The class adviser and department chairman both said this. Otherwise, we wouldn't go for anything."

Due to the fact that students who attend vocational schools have just graduated from junior high school, many students at Shandong Business Institute are underage.

Student: "I'm underage. I haven't reached 18 yet. I'm 17. And there are others among us who are younger than me."

Editor's note: the report goes on to discuss more of the reporter's interviews, including discussions about student workers' wages, forced long working hours, the product they are making, and the monetary benefit that schools receive for sending students to Foxconn.

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